

A TEICK PLAYED ON THE DUKE

249

The Duke had during the last two months undergone a ludicrous and humiliating adventure, very different from the tragedy which might have occurred if he had been in England. When the rebellion broke out he was engaged in negotiating a peace with the Scotch ambassadors in the neighbourhood of Melrose. He had come down with a commission over-riding the local authority of Percy. The jealous Earl, who wished to keep the business of the Border in his own hands, always resented such commissions from Westminster, especially those who came to make peace, for the petty wars gave him glory and power. The enemy had made the last successful raid, and he was burning for revenge.¹ He had, besides, a grudge against the Duke in person. The union of the two to quash the work of the Good Parliament had come to an end when Richard succeeded to the throne. Being the two greatest men in the kingdom, they were natural rivals. The day was soon to come when the House of Northumberland, having rashly placed the House of Lancaster on the throne, too late attempted to undo the deed, and fell for ever on the field of Shrewsbury.

Percy saw his chance in the Peasants' Eising. The whole country was up against the Duke, and there was at first no certain knowledge that the King did not, in hostility to his uncle, sympathise with the rebels. The cards might so turn up that John of Gaunt would be ruined, and the Earl determined to do his best to bring about this consummation. As he held the gates of England, he determined to close them in his rival's face. When the latter, having hurriedly completed his treaty with the Scots, hastened South to secure his imperilled position, the Warden of Berwick refused to admit him. He was forced to throw himself on the hospitality of the national enemies, and was entertained at Edinburgh by Douglas and the Scotch nobility. But his position in England was not really as bad as he feared, or as Percy hoped. The rebellion made it temporarily proper for the King to befriend him. The rioters had connected their pretended loyalty with the pretended treason of John of Gaunt, and if one was to be denied, the other

must be denied too. The

¹ Bidpatk's *Border History*; Speed's *Chronicle*, ed. 1623,
p. 732-